



For Immediate Release  
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## **Office of the Healthcare Advocate Recovers \$9.55 Million for Healthcare Consumers, Assists nearly 5,700 Individuals in 2013**

Victoria Veltri, State Healthcare Advocate, announced today that the Office of the Healthcare Advocate (OHA), the independent state agency that assists consumers with health plan issues, generated **\$9.55 million** in savings for Connecticut healthcare consumers in calendar year 2013. The \$9.55 million represents the costs of healthcare services, procedures and claims that would have been borne directly by consumers of healthcare, had OHA not intervened. OHA works solely on healthcare issues and its consumer recovery total reflect savings from intervention in fully-insured and self-funded health plans.

OHA assisted **5,683** healthcare consumers with questions about their healthcare coverage, direct intervention with health plans on denials of coverage for medical necessity, experimental/investigational status, and non medical necessity issues such as unwarranted billing actions or coding errors and non covered services determinations. As in previous years, mental health and substance use services comprised the most frequent clinical category of cases.

In 2013, OHA also played a key role on systemic health reform efforts. Among other activities, OHA:

- Continued to operate its Consumer Assistance Program (CAP) grant under the Affordable Care Act
- Partnered with Access Health CT to design and implement the Navigator and Assisters Outreach Program, enrolling thousands of residents into healthcare coverage
- Played a key role in negotiating the behavioral health insurance reform provisions of Public Act 13-3 in collaboration with insurance carriers in Connecticut
- Continued to partner with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to ensure that services for children whose parents have private health coverage are covered under private coverage before the state pays for services
- Continued to collaborate on a project with the Department of Social Services (DSS) to attempt to increase Medicaid recoveries under the Third Party Liability process
- Directed the State Innovation Model Initiative Model Design Grant Process

Veltri says, "OHA staff helped parents secure coverage for their babies' lifesaving treatment, overturned denials of coverage or corrected errors that prevented children and adults from getting necessary mental health and substance use treatment, physical, speech and ABA therapy, neurological evaluations, urgent chemotherapy and surgical interventions. The staff

handled thousands of calls from consumers who needed answers to questions about their healthcare coverage policies. They also saved the state hundreds of thousands of dollars.

“While our \$9.55 million recovery total on behalf of consumers is one measure of our value to the state, our real value is our commitment to and follow-through on timely, compassionate and effective services for each of the callers to our office last year.

“OHA is involved in every facet of health reform in Connecticut. While we advocated for consumers in each of the individual cases, we participated in or led systemic health reform efforts that will shape Connecticut’s healthcare future, one in which we will knock down barriers to access to high-quality, affordable, medically necessary healthcare.”

For free assistance, consumers can call 1-866-466-4446, or e-mail OHA at [healthcare.advocate@ct.gov](mailto:healthcare.advocate@ct.gov). For general information, Veltri recommends that consumers visit OHA at [www.ct.gov/oha](http://www.ct.gov/oha), at <https://www.facebook.com/pages/State-of-Connecticut-Office-of-the-Healthcare-Avocate/301102456997?ref=hl> and on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/user/stateofctoah>.

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